

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: LOS ADAES

Other Name/Site Number: Nuestra Señora del Pilar Presidio (16NA8);
San Miguel de Los Adaes Mission (16NA16)

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: [REDACTED] Not for publication: X

City/Town: Robeline Vicinity: X

State: Louisiana County: Natchitoches Code: 069 Zip Code: _____

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property
Private: X
Public-local: _____
Public-State: X
Public-Federal: _____

Category of Property
Building(s): _____
District: _____
Site: X
Structure: _____
Object: _____

Number of Resources within Property
Contributing

2

2

Noncontributing

1 buildings (museum)

sites

structures

objects
1 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this _____ nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official_____
Date_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official_____
Date_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau**5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

____ Entered in the National Register _____
____ Determined eligible for the _____
____ National Register _____
____ Determined not eligible for the _____
____ National Register _____
____ Removed from the National Register _____
____ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper_____
Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: GOVERNMENT
RELIGION
DEFENSE

Sub: Provincial Capital
Mission
Military Post (Presidio)

Current: LANDSCAPE
AGRICULTURE

Sub: State Park
Pasture

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: N/A

MATERIALS:

Foundation:

Walls:

Roof:

Other:

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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Site Type: The Spanish colonial sites of Nuestra Señora del Pilar de Los Adaes *presidio* (16NA8) and Mission San Miguel de Los Adaes (16NA16) (A.D. 1721-1774) [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] in Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana (See Figure 1). The *presidio* also served as the capital of the Spanish Province of Texas.

Environmental Setting: The present environment around the Los Adaes *presidio* and mission sites is similar to that found by the Spanish in the eighteenth century. Antoine DuPages, who visited Los Adaes in 1767, left a contemporary description of the area.

The terrain over which we traveled was varied and the countryside consisted of broad valleys and small hills fairly spaced out. In the valleys one could see fields of extremely tall grass which are apparently marshland in the winter. Where there is moisture, the hills are covered by woods consisting of diverse types of trees and very tall pines and other large trees in dry places. I was surprised to see a large quantity of these pines lying on the ground blackened and with a type of carbon powder at the base; one would have said that they had been set on fire. I noticed the same thing in those which were very old and still standing. At the ground level, the base of the tree becomes blackened and is reduced to powder, and little by little, because of the missing foundation, the trunk falls [Steele 1983:8].

The trees DuPages described were probably long leaf pine (*Pinus palustris*), which cannot germinate without burning. The Los Adaes area was probably annually burned off as part of a planned burn to stimulate the growth of pasture land in the eighteenth century (Gregory 1985:4). The "tall grass" in "marshy" areas noted by DuPages was either cattail or cane (Gregory 1985:5).

The soils of northwestern Louisiana, like those of the Los Adaes area, are composed of a thin grayish-brown fine loam covering a deep red colored acidic clay and sand subsoil. These soils have low agricultural potential and are generally only good for pine woodlands or pasture lands. The Spanish found the soil of the Los Adaes area was not conducive for farming and there were frequent crop failures (Gregory 1985:2-4).

Although pine tends to be located on the upland areas, in the bottomlands native oak, sweetgum, plum, magnolia, holly, beech, dogwood, hickory, and pecan trees occur. Also noted are three species of plants probably introduced in the eighteenth century by the Spanish to the area; mesquite, lemon trees, and copper lilies. Mesquite is a southwestern plant that grows only as far

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east as Los Adaes. The lemon trees seeded themselves from introduced Spanish varieties. The copper lily is a flowering plant noted at Hispanic settlements in Mexico, Panama, and Chile, and is found only in Louisiana in the Los Adaes area where it is believed they were brought in by the Spanish (Gregory 1985:2-5).

Archeological Investigations: Los Adaes *presidio* was known from historical records to have existed in northwestern Louisiana. In 1965, Dr. Hiram F. Gregory, of Northwestern State University, conducted test excavations verifying the location of the fort. Further investigations in 1967 by Gregory uncovered a structure which compared with the 1768 Urrutia Map of the Los Adaes area (See Figures 2 and 3) made it evident he had uncovered the remains of the Governor's House within the *presidio* (Gregory 1980:10-12).

In 1979, Gregory uncovered the outline of the northern and southeastern bastions, the intervening stockade line (or curtain wall), and portions of the exterior *foso* or defensive ditch of the *presidio* (See Figure 3) (Gregory 1980:14-16).

Throughout the 1980s Gregory conducted archeological investigations east of the stockade line where the 1786 Urrutia map indicated structures were located (See Figure 2). Work here uncovered the remains of a *jacal*. This was a Native American structure constructed of a frame of upright logs and covered with daub, or mud (See Figure 4) (Gregory 1984:17).

Gregory's most recent excavations occurred in 1987. This time the work was south of the defined limits of the *presidio* across a [REDACTED] where the 1768 Urrutia map located San Miguel Mission (See Figures 2 and 5). These excavations found foundations related to the mission structures and numerous Spanish colonial artifacts (H. F. Gregory, Personal Communication, 1990).

Over the last 25 years archeologists have defined the Governor's House inside the stockade, two of the three defensive bastions, the stockade line and defensive ditch, structures outside the fort, including Mission San Miguel, and numerous features including trash pits, hearths, wells, foundations, and post holes associated with the Spanish occupation of the Los Adaes area. Colonial period artifacts recovered include historic Caddoan, Natchez, Choctaw, and Wichita Indian ceramics; imported Mexican majolica, French faience, Chinese porcelain, and Spanish Olive Jar ceramics; glass bottle fragments and beads; iron gun parts, knives, buckles, buttons, horse trappings, and nails; copper kettle fragments; lead bale seals and musket balls, French gunflints; brass candlestick fragments and religious medals; and silver coins (Gregory 1980; Gregory 1984).

Site Integrity: Archeological investigations conducted by Northwestern State University demonstrated the eighteenth century *presidio* and mission sites of Los Adaes are intact. This may be attributed to the forced abandonment of the site (1774), little

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reuse of the site during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and to the public protection of the area in the recent decades.

In 1774, the Spanish settlers were forced to relocate to San Antonio, the above ground wood structures quickly disintegrated. There is evidence that the area experienced minor reoccupation during the first half of the nineteenth century, but the main road between Natchitoches and Fort Jesup (designated NHLs in 1978 and 1961, respectively) no longer went through Los Adaes which discouraged development.

In 1979, after Gregory's investigations defined the location of the *presidio*, the eastern half of this site, owned by the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury since the early twentieth century was given to the State Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism. In 1980, this latter agency acquired the western half of the *presidio* site. It has since developed an interpretive facility for the fort. In 1986 the Los Adaes *presidio* site was designated an NHL.

In 1987, further work by Northwestern State University to the south of the *presidio* site confirmed the location of the intact remains of the second San Miguel de Los Adaes mission site, in the vicinity indicated on the 1768 map. This discovery made logical an expansion of the boundary of the Landmark.

Only one noncontributing structure, the site museum is located within the NHL boundaries. All land within the boundary expansion is open cattle pasture.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Nationally: X Statewide: Locally:

Applicable National
Register Criteria:

A X B C D X

Criteria Considerations
(Exceptions):

A B C D E F G

NHL Criteria: Criteria 1 and 6

NHL Theme(s):

II. European Colonial Exploration and Settlement

A. Spanish Exploration and Settlement - Southeast

Areas of Significance: Exploration and Settlement

Period(s) of Significance: Spanish Colonial

Significant Dates: A.D. 1721-1774

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: Spanish Colonial, Native American - Caddo

Architect/Builder: Marques de Aguayo

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Summary Statement of Significance: The significance of the sites of Nuestra Señora del Pilar de Los Adaes *presidio* and San Miguel de Los Adaes mission derives from the role they played in maintaining the international balance of power between Spain and France on the border between the Spanish province of Texas and French Louisiana in the eighteenth century. Los Adaes *presidio* and San Miguel mission were founded in 1721 by the Spanish to check French expansion into east Texas. Los Adaes is the only *presidio* and provincial capital complex in the Spanish borderlands within the United States not impacted by urban expansion. The intact nature of the site, demonstrated by archeological investigations, provides an extraordinary opportunity to study life at a Spanish colonial frontier settlement, the degree to which Spanish exclusion policies toward other colonial powers was actually maintained on the frontier, and European-Native American interdependence on the Texas-Louisiana frontier.

The historic sites of Los Adaes *presidio* and San Miguel mission are considered nationally significant under the National Historic Landmark Criteria 1 and 6 for being an outstanding example of Spanish colonization, and for its demonstrated and potential archeological significance, respectively. The sites fall under the National Historic Landmark Theme - European Colonial Exploration and Settlement, and the Subtheme of Spanish Exploration and Settlement in the Southeast.

NHL Thematic Framework**II. European Colonial Exploration and Settlement****A. Spanish Exploration and Settlement - Southeast****The Spanish on the Southeastern Frontier**

Northwestern Louisiana was first visited by Europeans from the DeSoto Expedition of 1539-1543, providing Spain with a claim to this area inhabited by the Ais, a sub-group of the Caddo. Lack of mineral wealth delayed Spanish interest in the area until the late seventeenth century when the colonial government of New Spain undertook new explorations and settlement of present-day Texas and Louisiana in response to French incursions in the Lower Mississippi River Valley.

In 1682, Robert Cavelier Le Sieur de la Salle, led a group of French Canadian fur traders on the first successful descent of the Mississippi River. He proposed to the King of France the creation of a line of trading posts stretching from French Canada west to the Great Lakes, then south along the Mississippi River, and along the Gulf Coast. Such posts La Salle reasoned would tap the fur trade of the interior of North America, and place French

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settlements close to Spanish silver mines in Northern Mexico and the routes of Spanish treasure ships in the Gulf of Mexico.

In July of 1684 La Salle sailed from France with four hundred settlers to establish a colony at the mouth of the Mississippi River as the first step in implementing his plan. The French colonists missed their intended landfall and ended up on the Texas Gulf shore where they established a colony on Matagorda Bay. La Salle was killed in an attempt to secure assistance for the French settlers on Matagorda Bay from the French traders on the Arkansas River at the Arkansas Post (Menard-Hodges Mounds Site designated an NHL in 1989). The Matagorda Bay settlement itself was destroyed by Texas coastal Native Americans in early 1689 (Celiz 1967:6-9).

Hearing rumors of the French settlement, the Spanish, starting in 1686, dispatched five sea borne and three overland expeditions to find and remove the intruders from Spanish territory. Finally, in April 1689, an expedition from the province of Coahuila found the remains of La Salle's destroyed fort and a few French survivors living among the tribes of coastal Texas (Celiz 1967:9). This threat of French intrusion caused a brief flurry of interest in establishing missions and *presidios*, or forts, in the Province of Texas during the 1690s, but little was accomplished until the French reappeared in force in the Lower Mississippi River Valley in the second decade of the eighteenth century (Celiz 1967:11).

In 1713, the Governor of French Louisiana, Antoine de La Mothe Cadillac, had his agent Louis Juchereau de Saint-Denis establish a trading post at Natchitoches, in present-day northwest Louisiana (Celiz 1967:12). The Spanish responded by establishing a series of missions in east Texas in 1716 and 1717. The most remote of these missions was San Miguel de los Adaes founded January 29, 1717, about eight miles west of French Natchitoches by Father Antonio Margil de Jesus (Celiz 1967:14, 33). *BARNES says there were two sites (1717 & 1721) and this refers to the first site. He says that is noted in the Celiz citation.*

For a time friendly relations prevailed between the Spanish missions and the French traders on the east Texas frontier. French were able to supply the Spanish in the Province of Texas with all manner of trade goods, and several French traders traveled far into Mexico through the efforts of Saint-Denis married the daughter of the Spanish Governor of Coahuila. However, the influence of French traders on the frontier concerned among the Spanish.

The nearness of the French on the Red River worried the new [Spanish] settlers greatly, for the Indians displayed many guns, knives, clothes, and trinkets that the French had given them. The obedience of the [Caddoan] Indians, the missionaries soon discovered, could be bought only by gifts, and the Spaniards had hardly enough supplies for themselves [Celiz 1967:15].

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Toward the end of 1717 Spanish officials were seizing the goods of French traders in Spanish Texas and expelling the foreigners.

In 1718, Spanish Governor Martin de Alarcon established a settlement and the mission of San Antonio de Valero (later known as the Alamo) in the vicinity of present-day San Antonio, Texas as the base for an expanded Spanish frontier in the Province of Texas. In the same year (1718), Alarcon also visited the missions of the east Texas frontier, including San Miguel de Los Adaes.

. . . distributing gifts among the [Caddoan] Indians and receiving from them in turn many gifts and demonstrations of loyalty, delivering supplies to the hard-pressed soldiers and missionaries, and examining the country for natural resources and for goods introduced by the French [Celiz 1967:25].

These efforts on the part of the Spanish Governor did not secure the frontier of Spanish Texas. Dynastic disputes between France and Spain would cause the destruction of San Miguel mission.

In the year 1719 Texas was caught up in the web of international conflict which pitted Spain against France in Europe. As regularly happened, the belligerency of the mother country involved the American colony. France was challenging Spain's recent occupation of Sardinia and invasion of Sicily. It was the first clash between the two Bourbon crowns since the accession of Philippe d'Anjou, as Philip V, to the Spanish throne in 1700. Word of the conflict to nationals overseas was quicker out of France. Jean-Baptiste LeMoyne [Bienville], now governor of Louisiana, informed of the state of war in Europe, took instant action and surprised and captured Pensacola on May 14, 1719. At almost the same time Bienville gave orders that the Spaniards be dislodged from Texas.

Sometime between June 16 and June 22 the commandant at Natchitoches, one M. [Philippe] Blondel, appeared at San Miguel de los Adaes with a complement of seven men. This small force was wholly adequate to handle the one soldier and solitary lay brother currently at the mission because the padre and other soldier at the moment were off to Dolores on business. The lay brother managed to escape and on June 22 rushed, breathless, into Dolores with the news of the "attack." He announced further that the French had threatened to drive the Spaniards completely out of Texas and back to the Rio Grande [Bannon 1974:119].

Mission Dolores was abandoned by the Spanish who withdrew to San Francisco on the Neches, over a hundred miles west of San Miguel mission. Upon hearing of the French attack on east Texas the Viceroy of New Spain the Marques de Valero ordered Joseph Azlor

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Vitro de Vera, Marques de Aguayo to recover Texas from the French (Bannon 1974:120).

The Viceroy's instructions to Aguayo were to reoccupy the Texas province, restore the missionaries to their former posts, and erect a fort in Caddo country as a bulwark against any future French aggression. Aguayo slowly built up his armed force in San Antonio throughout 1720 and 1721 to a strength of 500 men, before attempting to reoccupy east Texas (Bannon 1974:120).

Aguayo first established a *presidio* at Espiritu Santo (Matagorda Bay), on the site of La Salle's 1684 colony. The main force left San Antonio in May of 1721 for east Texas (Bannon 1974:121-122). Aguayo made his way slowly northeast arriving at San Francisco on the Neches in July. While at Neches the French trader Saint-Denis appeared to inform Aguayo that the war between France and Spain had ended. The Spanish commander moved on unopposed to the abandoned San Miguel mission in August (Bannon 1974:12-13).

Aguayo was under orders to reestablish the Spanish missionaries at San Miguel, but his inspection of the ruined mission found the site lacked water. For this reason he moved his army half a league further east to establish a military campsite and a new location for the mission where water was available (Gregory 1981:9-10).

The new mission site for San Miguel was also selected as the location for the *presidio* Aguayo intended to construct to protect the missions of the province of Texas. During September and October of 1721 Aguayo's force undertook the construction of a large *presidio* which he christened Nuestra Señora del Pilar de Los Adaes. He installed 100 men and six cannon at the fort. Fray Antonio Margil relocated San Miguel near the fort in the same year (Bannon 1974:121). The expedition's diarist, Don Juan Antonio de la Pena, described the new *presidio*.

He [Aguayo] favored this site, because, while all the rest of the country is closed in and covered with shady trees, there are here, close to the *presidio*, suitable ravines in which to erect the mission, and sufficient land, with a spring of water along the hillside, for Spaniards and Indians to cultivate separately. On this site, which commands a view of all the surrounding country, his Lordship drew the lines for the fortress. Work on the fortress, which was to be hexagonal in form, was begun immediately; three corners were not fortified, but the other three were built in such a manner that each covers and defends two curtains. Each of the curtains is fifty-five varas [yards] in length. After the number of bastions had been reduced the fortress, to defend which there were only six cannon, fitted within the section that had been marked off and was sufficiently large to accommodate the garrison of one hundred soldiers, thirty of whom will always be busy taking care of the horses and livestock. The

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distance from the fortress to the spring is half that covered by a musket-shot, but an effort will be made to dig a well within the plaza. The foundation for the fortress had to be opened with crowbars, and the site, as well as the ground around the fortress, had to be cleared of very numerous and large trees. These trees were felled so that the enemy might not approach unseen and so that as is proper, the stockade might have the best possible defense [Forrestal 1935].

By mid-October construction of the *presidio* was completed by Aguayo's troops. The formal dedication of this frontier fortress and the ceremony to establish a new mission occurred on October 12, 1721 and was marked by a day of celebration.

The ceremony for the restoration of the mission, which is to be erected a quarter of a league from the *presidio*, was celebrated in the *presidio* chapel on the feast of the Archangel Saint Michael; and on October 12, feast of the Apparition of Our Lady of Pilar in Zaragoza, whom his Lordship [Aguayo] had chosen as patroness and column of defense on that frontier, was celebrated the dedication of both chapel and *presidio*. The two feasts were solemnized with the greatest possible rejoicing, and volleys were fired by the artillery and companies, which formed on the military plaza during the Mass sung by Doctor Jose Codallos y Rabal. During the ceremony of blessing the [*presidio*] chapel and fortress the image of Our Lady of Pilar, whose cult the Reverend Father Margil extolled in an eloquent sermon, was carried in procession. At the close of the ceremonies his Lordship gave an excellent banquet to the Padres and gave brandy to the soldiers, who in various kinds of dances, comedies, and farces showed their joy [Forrestal 1935].

Before leaving Texas in 1722, Aguayo also erected a *presidio* in San Antonio in addition to the fort at Los Adaes and the one at Matagorda Bay (Bannon 1974:121-122). Aguayo retired from the military in 1722 having firmly reestablished the Spanish presence in east Texas. According to Eleanor C. Buckley, in "The Aguayo Expedition into Texas and Louisiana, 1719-1722",

When Aguayo retired from Texas he left ten missions where before the retreat there had been seven, four *presidios* where there had been two, two hundred and sixty-eight soldiers instead of some sixty or seventy before, and two *presidios* were for the first time erected at points where danger from foreign aggression was most feared - Los Adaes and Espiritu Santo [1911:60-61].

Aguayo's second-in-command, Don Fernando Perez de Almazan, established the *presidio* at Los Adaes as the capital of the province of Texas in 1722. A 1722 plan drawing (See Figure 6) of

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the *presidio* reveals Los Adaes was a hexagonal shaped walled fortress with three bastions at every other point that enclosed an area [REDACTED]. Within the fort was the Governor's House, presidial chapel, guardhouse, barracks for the officers and men and their families, and powder magazine. There also appeared to be outer ditch works and a well organized internal system of housing for the officers and men (Gregory 1981:20-21).

[REDACTED] the missionaries constructed the second San Miguel mission. Eventually a mission complex of a church, a friary, and miscellaneous other buildings would be completed. However, the Caddoans did not congregate around the mission, leaving the missionaries to devote most of their time to ministering to the presidial families (Gregory 1981:21, 23).

In 1724, Pedro de Rivera, at the request of the Viceroy of New Spain undertook a five year inspection of the northern *presidios*, which included Los Adaes. Rivera's description of the Spanish community was as follows,

In Adays [Adaes] there was a company of more than 100 soldiers, including the officers. A governor commanded the company and administered the province. The soldiers of the garrison were assigned to guard the *presidio*, which was a wooden stockade, and to guard the garrison's houses. The soldiers assisted in cultivating some fields for subsistence, constructing barracks, and assisting the 3 apostolic missions that pertained to that *presidio*. There were no Indians at the missions; those that inhabited the province lived peacefully at their rancherias [Indian villages] [Naylor & Polzer 1988:83].

Rivera noted that the governor was "charging excessive prices for items needed by the soldiers," but did not recommend charges be filed against the governor (Naylor & Polzer 1988:85, 114). The most important recommendation by Rivera was to reduce the number of soldiers from 100 to 60 as they faced a French garrison "manned by only twenty-five men and serves solely to mark the border of French territory," and because Caddoan tribes in the area "are docile and peace-loving in nature" (Naylor & Polzer 1988:157).

According to Rivera's report,

. . . sixty positions are sufficient to deal with the French when they are at peace, as they are now. If war were to break out and they decided to attack us, they would do so with a formal army led by experienced officers brought in from Mobile or Canada. Such an army would have little difficulty in subjugating our forces, for two reasons. In the first place, our men are inexperienced in such warfare, and second, the

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French firearms are effective from a long range, whereas our arquebuses have only short-range capability. Thus the French could easily conquer these lands. It is true that the presidio of Adays [Adaes] is enclosed by a stockade, but nonetheless the French could become masters of the interior lands without losing a man. All they would have to do would be to keep the presidio to their left and pass along the banks of the Caudachos [Red] River, directing their march toward the Nazones. From there they could conquer the Ayknays, Nechas, and Navidachos and establish their base among the latter nation. Thus strategically situated, they could stop all convoys heading toward the presidios and with little effort force them to surrender. For these reasons I have suggested to your excellency that the forty superfluous positions be removed, much to the benefit of the royal treasury [Naylor & Polzer 1988:157].

The military population of Los Adaes *presidio* remained the same as the government did not act on Rivera's recommendation. However, the following decade proved to be one of extreme distress to the Spanish inhabitants. The poor quality of the soil in the vicinity meant frequent crop failures. The remoteness of Los Adaes meant chronic shortages of basic necessities.

The clothing of the men consisted of rags, blankets, and buffalo hides, women had so little to wear that many would not leave their huts. There were no shoes, hats, hose, or soap for the settlers, food was rationed, and the lieutenant governor even requested a pair of pants for himself [Jones 1979:61].

Supplies of both food and consumer goods, however, were finally supplied in quantity by the French at Natchitoches. Corn, beans, and wheat were acquired from the very Frenchmen the Spanish at the fort were supposed to protect Spanish Texas from in the event of war. To pay for these goods an illicit trade in Spanish wine, brandy, horses, and buffalo robes was fostered by the necessity to maintain the *presidio* garrison (Gregory 1981:33).

The problems of supply for the Spanish at Los Adaes were compounded by their inability to provide the local Caddoan groups with trade goods. Frenchmen from Natchitoches traded with them to such an extent that in 1753 Governor Barrios warned that "any time a break might occur between the two crowns [France and Spain], your Excellency may be assured that we [at Los Adaes] will be sacrificed by the Indians at only a word from the French" (Hackett 1931:64).

Barrios also complained about the poor quality of Spanish trade goods, "the things that we have do not appeal to them . . . [the Caddoans] . . . they want only powder, shot, muskets, cloth, blankets, razors, and knives from the French" (Hackett 1931:66).

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Barrios noted the "French give them [the Caddoans] these articles at prices for which we could not pay the freight" (Hackett 1931:67).

In spite of these problems the Spanish and French were so linked economically and strategically to each other a threat to one European group was viewed as a threat to the other. In 1729, when the Natchez attacked and destroyed the French garrison at Fort Rosalie (present-day Natchez, Mississippi) the Spanish Governor sent a contingent of Spanish soldiers from Los Adaes to aid the French in destroying the Grand Village of the Natchez (designated a National Historic Landmark in 1964) (Gregory 1981:39).

In the 1760s a second inspection of the northern *presidios* of New Spain was undertaken, and this time a detailed map of the fort and mission areas at Los Adaes was prepared. The 1768 map showing the *presidio* and San Miguel mission indicated the hexagonal shaped fortress shape had been maintained but the internal structure of the fort demonstrates a more haphazard arrangement than that shown in the 1722 map. The 1768 map shows the location of the second San Miguel mission, and roads leading east to French Natchitoches and west to other Spanish possessions. In addition, the map provides detailed views of the structures at Los Adaes. They appear to be mainly French style "post-in-hole" *bousillage* structures with pitched roofs and wide porches (See Figure 2).

The *bousillage* construction consisted of heavy timber framing to hold up the walls and roof of the building with infill consisting of vertical interwoven saplings covered with a mixture of mud and spanish moss, or animal hair as binder. The roofs were wooden framed and shingled. These structures were enclosed by a wooden stockade. Outside the *presidio* walls a number of additional structures are noted on the 1768 map of the Spanish and Caddoan settlers, and the San Miguel de Los Adaes mission and priest's house (See Figure 2).

A short description of Los Adaes in 1774 indicates that the mission was finally beginning to attract converts among the Caddoans.

The *presidio* of Los Adaes is on the highway to Nachitoos [Natchitoches] . . . a short distance from the *presidio* a mission was established called Our Lady of Pilar where about a hundred Indian families live [O'Crowley 1774:50].

Los Adaes served thirteen Spanish governors of the province of Texas as the provincial capital from 1722 to 1774. During this time friendly relations between the French in Natchitoches and the Spanish in Los Adaes were maintained. At the end of the French and Indian War (1763), in which Spain and France were allied against the British, France gave up the control of Louisiana to the Spanish.

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As the Spanish frontier advanced eastward toward the Mississippi River Los Adaes lost its strategic importance as a check against French incursions into Texas. In 1774, the five hundred settlers at Los Adaes were removed to San Antonio which became the new capital of Texas, and Los Adaes was abandoned. San Miguel mission was also abandoned at this time and its furnishings were removed to San Antonio (Gregory 1981:40-41).

Archeological Research of the Spanish-French Frontier

By the end of the seventeenth century three European nations were vying for control of the future Southeastern United States. The British in the Carolinas were moving west and south from their settlements along the east coast. The French were establishing trading posts throughout the length of the Mississippi River, south from their Canadian and Great Lakes colonies. The Spanish were expanding northward and eastward from Mexico through Texas and westward from their settlements in Florida.

The French sent a series of explorers down the Mississippi and in 1718 founded the city of New Orleans which established their control of the Lower Mississippi River Valley. The French presence split the Spanish borderlands in two, driving a wedge between Old Florida and the province of Texas. The Spanish response to what they viewed as an encroachment on their territory was to send more soldiers and missionaries into east Texas. With the founding of Natchitoches by the French, the Spanish extended their mission frontier into northwestern Louisiana to forestall further encroachment.

War in Europe between the French and Spanish kings resulted in a raid on the mission of San Miguel by a small group of Frenchmen from Natchitoches. When news of this event reached the Spanish Viceroy, he gave orders to Marques de Aguayo to gather a 500 man army to retake Spanish territory. By the time Aguayo reached San Miguel the war was over, but he would use the available men to construct a major fortress and the capital of Texas, leaving it garrisoned with 100 men and six cannons.

The official justification for founding Los Adaes and San Miguel was to provide a barrier to the French expansion and as a means to control trade with Plains tribes. What started out as an adversarial relationship developed in time into one of tacit and illicit cooperation. Los Adaes was more than 300 miles away from the nearest Spanish population and trading center but only twenty miles from the French trading post at Natchitoches. Soon an economic relationship developed on the frontier among the Spanish at Los Adaes, their French neighbors at Natchitoches, and the various tribal groups of east Texas. Los Adaes became the hub of a major trading system and the focal point of a tri-ethnic interaction sphere.

Lack of adequate quantities of food and consumer goods and transport were problems in the Spanish presidial system. Repeated crop failures between 1730 and the abandonment of the

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site in 1774 struck Los Adaes hard. However, the garrison could easily obtain food supplies from the French. The Spanish traded buffalo hides, horses, and salt, obtained from the Plains tribes, to the French for food and consumer goods they could not obtain through their own supply system. Horses and salt were particularly scarce in the French settlements and in time Los Adaes became the chief supplier of these articles for the Lower Mississippi River Valley.

The Spanish presidial line in North America stretched from St. Augustine, Florida to San Francisco, California. The larger *presidios* consisted of San Francisco, Monterey, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, California; Tucson, Arizona; Santa Fe, New Mexico; San Antonio, Texas; Los Adaes, Louisiana; and St. Augustine, Florida. The majority of these *presidios* have since their founding evolved into modern cities. The growth of these Spanish colonial forts into modern American towns resulted in the destruction of the archeological remains of most of these *presidios*. This was not the case at Los Adaes.

The *presidio* and mission archeological sites of Los Adaes were never built upon because the entire population was removed by order of the Spanish Governor in 1774 and the area was never reoccupied. This makes this site an exceptional scientific laboratory to study Spanish colonial frontier life.

Past archeological investigations confirmed the *presidio* of Los Adaes and San Miguel mission were laid out as noted on the 1722 and 1768 maps (See Figures 2 and 6). They provided information on the type of construction techniques used in the creation of the stockade and individual structures. And, they have recovered artifacts from Caddoans, common soldiers, and the Governors of the Province of Texas as a basis for understanding the social and economic differences between different classes of people at Los Adaes.

Future investigations could detail specific activity areas both inside and outside the *presidio*, and at the mission. They could identify the type of subsistence foods used by various classes and groups of peoples, be they Spanish, Mestizo, Caddo, or other tribal groups. And, they could provide detailed information on trade between the Spanish and the French noted in the historical documents and clarify the roles of the Europeans and various tribal groups and the types of trade goods supplied by each group.

Contact between the Spanish and the French was greater than officially sanctioned, yet the *presidio* and mission complex of Los Adaes did succeed in blocking French expansion into east Texas and was strategically important in maintaining the international balance of power along the Texas-Louisiana frontier. Its archeological remains provide a singular opportunity to learn about Spanish colonial life on the frontier.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

___ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been
requested.
X Previously Listed in the National Register. 1978
___ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
X Designated a National Historic Landmark. 1986
___ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: # _____
___ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

X State Historic Preservation Office: LOUISIANA
___ Other State Agency
___ Federal Agency
___ Local Government
___ University
X Other (Specify Repository): NORTHWESTERN LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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UTM References: Zone Northing Easting Zone Northing Easting
[REDACTED]Verbal Boundary Description:
[REDACTED]Boundary Justification:
[REDACTED]**11. FORM PREPARED BY**Name/Title: Mark R. Barnes, Ph.D., Senior Archeologist,
National Register Programs Division

Org.: National Park Service, SERO

Street/#: 75 Spring Street, SW

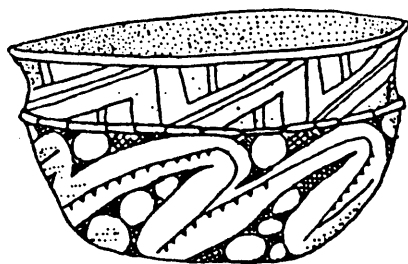
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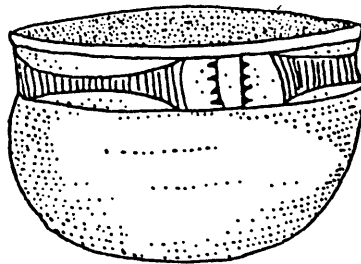
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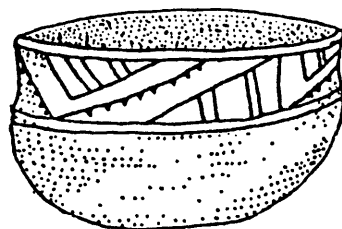
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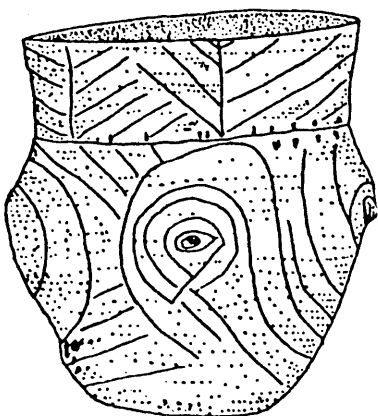
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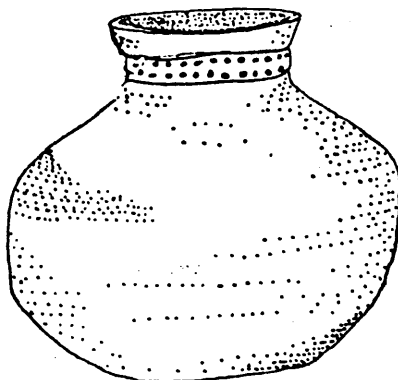
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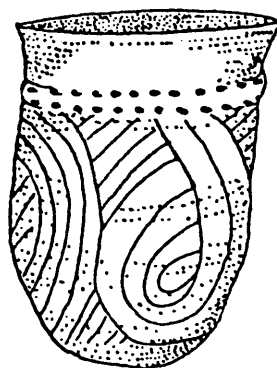
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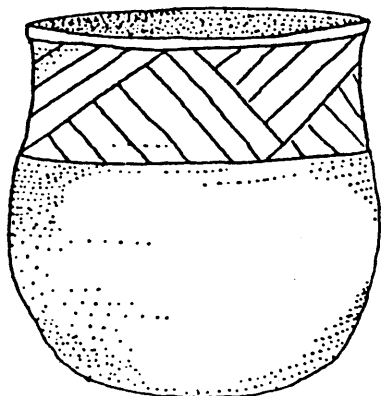
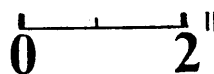
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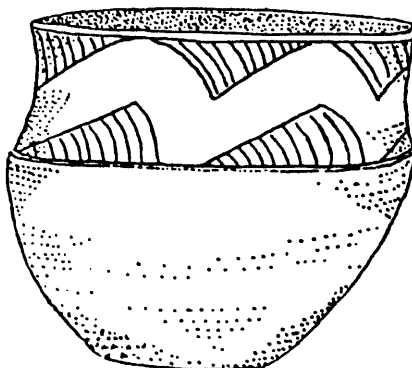
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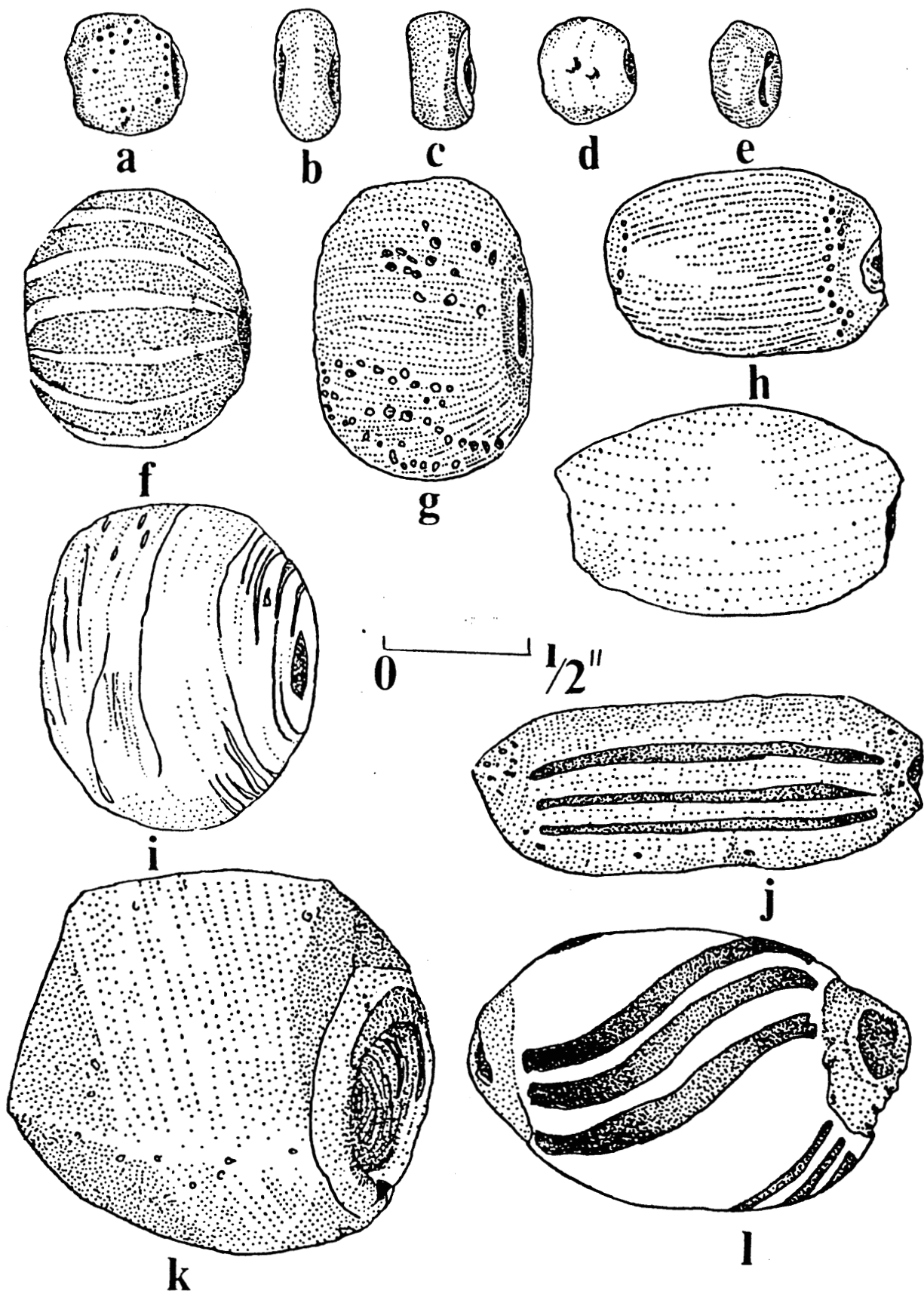
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18th Century Glass Beads
Presidio Los Adaes

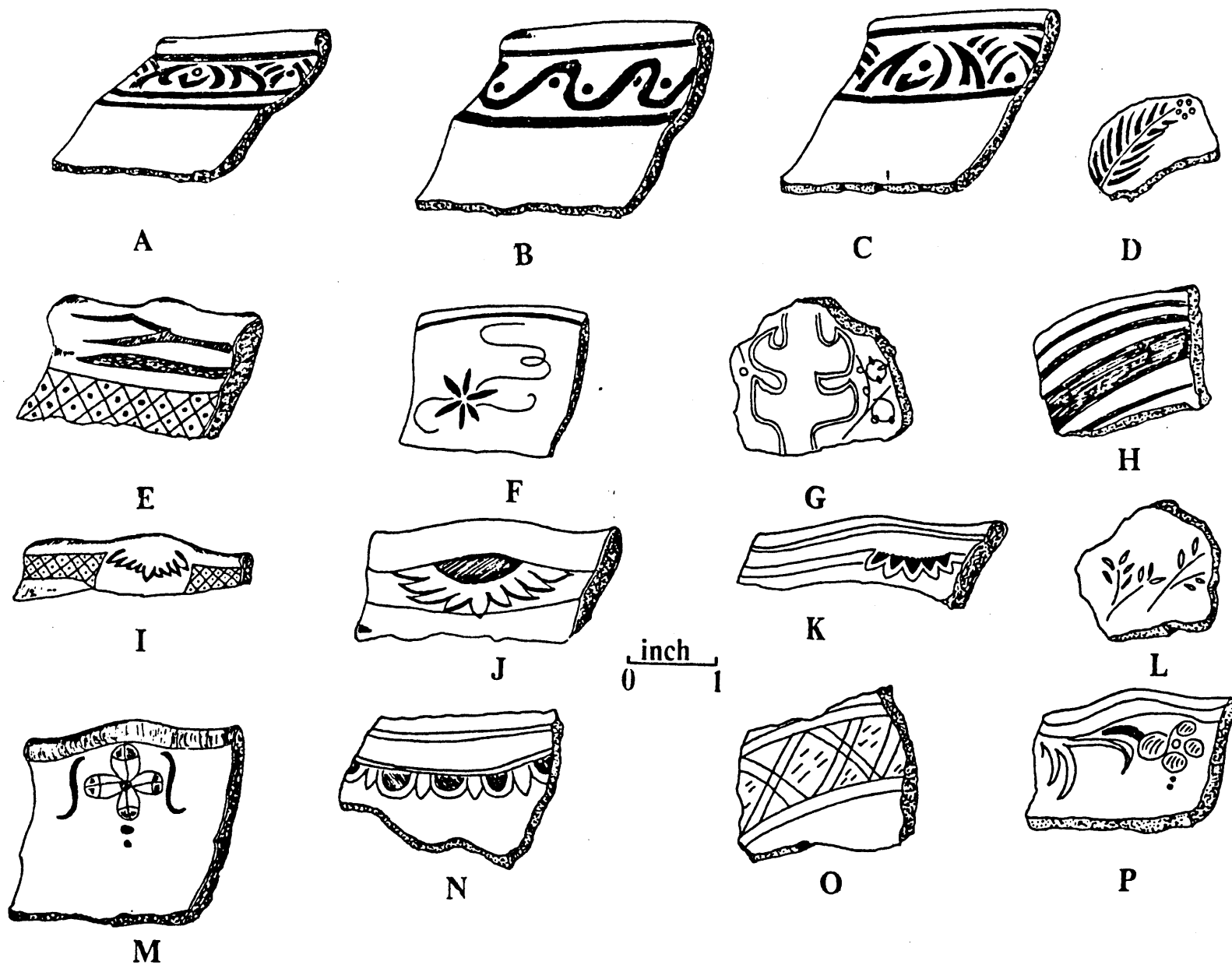


FIG. 9

Sherds of 18th Century
French Tin-Glazed Ceramics
Los Adaes



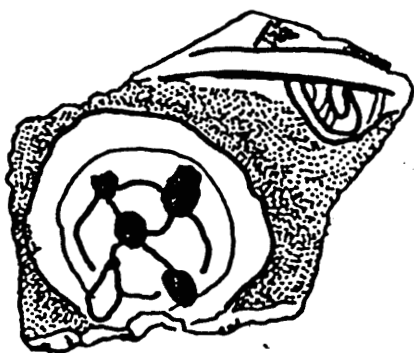
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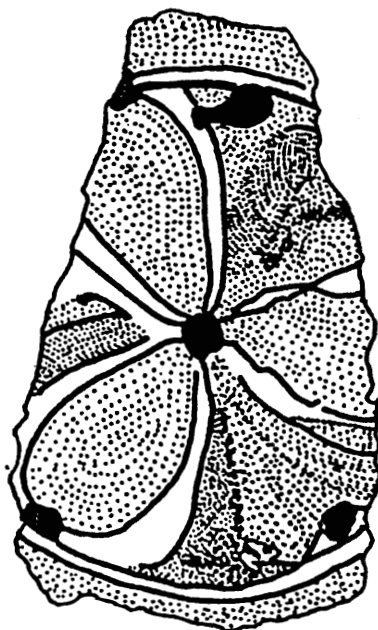
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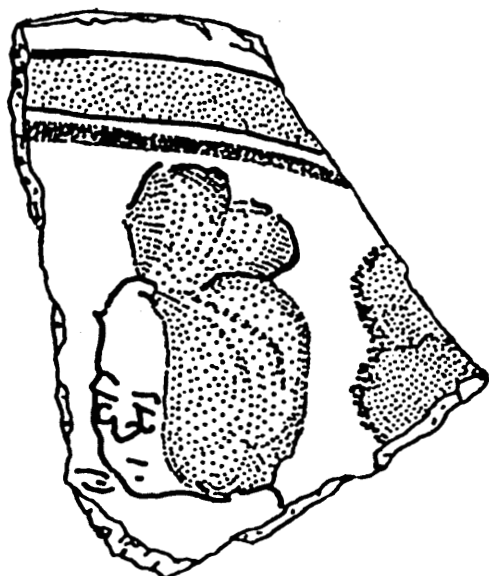
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FIG. 10

Examples of Spanish
Majolica - Presidio Los Ada:
1690-1803

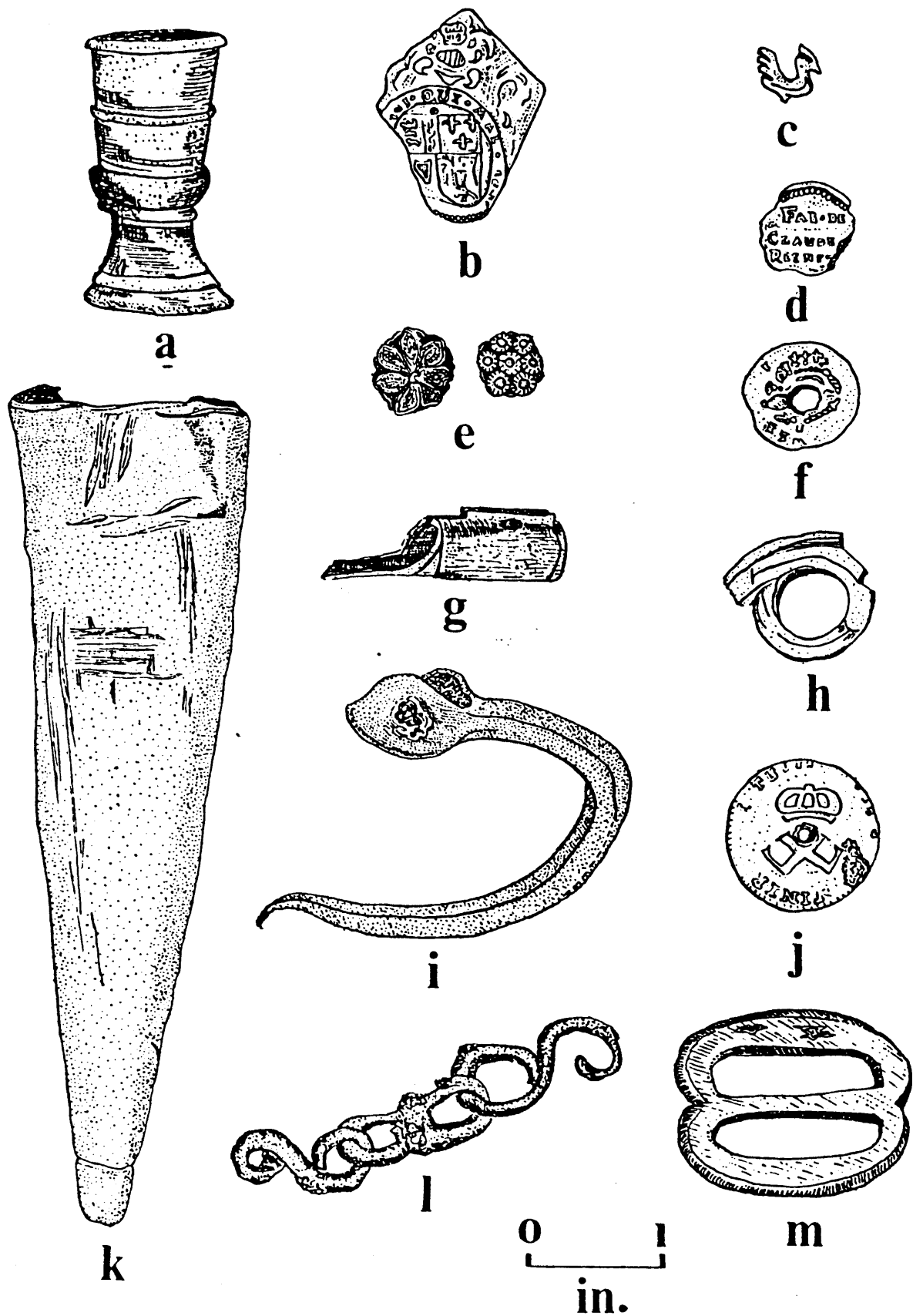


Fig. 11

18th Century
Metal Artifacts Los Adaes
French and Spanish